

CHINA'S WAR BY OTHER MEANS: UNVEILING CHINA'S QUEST  
FOR INFORMATION DOMINANCE

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

CHINA'S WAR BY OTHER MEANS: UNVEILING CHINA'S QUEST FOR INFORMATION DOMINANCE, by Maj Teresa L. Sullivan, 87 pages.

This thesis adds to the body of knowledge and scholarly literature by attempting to illuminate China's communication strategy during three historical military engagements, as well as analyze research from leading experts in China's information operations. This topic is significant to the military profession and other scholars because China executes communication strategy using methods which may not be widely understood by information practitioners. China achieves objectives through the use of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) National Instruments of Power (IOP) in ways United States leaders may not fully comprehend. China attempted communication strategy in the following engagements, and executed plans differently each time. The research questions addressed in this thesis are as follows: To what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007?

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## ACRONYMS

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CNO	Computer Network Operations
DIME	Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economic
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DSPD	Defense Support to Public Diplomacy
EW	Electronic Warfare
IE	Information Environment
IO	Information Operations
IOP	Instruments of Power
IW	Information Warfare
MILDEC	Military Deception
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
OPSEC	Operational Security
PA	Public Affairs
PD	Public Diplomacy
PLA	People's Liberation Army
SC	Strategic Communication



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Therefore, when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near. Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him. When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him. Anger his general and confuse him. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance. Keep him under stress and wear him down. When he is united, divide him. Attack when he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you.<sup>1</sup>

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Modern Chinese military officers study lessons from the *Stratagems of the Warring States* – an ancient Chinese manual of statecraft.<sup>2</sup> Chinese military leaders draw upon lessons learned from the Eastern way of warfare to prevail in today's operating environment.<sup>3</sup> The Western way of war, based largely upon theorists, Antoine-Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz, informs both quantitative and qualitative views of warfare focusing on mass, power, technology, decisive action, and intangible aspects of military genius and the remarkable trinity—army, government, and the people.<sup>4</sup> The Eastern way of war centers around winning without fighting, rendering military force

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu, and Samuel B. Griffith, *The Art of War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon* (New York, NY: St Martins Griffen, 2016), 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans, Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

irrational by the use of diplomacy, economy and information, and, most of all – deception.<sup>5</sup>

In Chinese, *shi*, a term which is not fully translatable in the English language, is used to describe the momentum of a potential force working to influence and shape favorable outcomes, using deception to convince others to do one's bidding.<sup>6</sup> To win, one must have insight and the advantage of *shi*.<sup>7</sup> Winning requires the ability to identify a strategic vulnerability to exploit, harnessing the advantage, and convincing the adversary to unknowingly do one's will.<sup>8</sup> China uses *shi* to influence in the information domain.

Chinese leaders leverage influence in the public domain by generating public trust and support at home, and by weakening an enemy's will to fight as part of a three-pronged approach in an effort to rise globally, referred to as "Three Warfares."<sup>9</sup> Three Warfares includes psychological, media and legal warfare, and is designed to influence public opinion by way of psychological pressure and legal bureaucracy to assert Chinese interests.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, understanding China's actions in the information environment (IE) is increasingly important in protecting U.S. interests.

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<sup>5</sup> Pillsbury, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Steven Halper, *China: The Three Warfares*, Washington, DC: Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, May 2013, accessed May 17, 2017. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.650.9676&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

This thesis examines three historical engagements in an attempt to better understand China's communication strategy. The selected engagements include China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. Each of these cases are military actions initiated by China, and widely reported upon in the international media. By analyzing these historical engagements through qualitative content analysis, the reader may gain a better understanding about how China operates in the IE.

### Research Question

This thesis will attempt to answer the following question: to what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007? Other subsidiary questions include: (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent?

This research is significant to the military profession and other scholars because current research suggests China masks its intentions in the IE.<sup>11</sup> China achieves objectives through the use of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) National Instruments of Power (IOP) in ways United States leaders do not fully comprehend.<sup>12</sup> Countering China's ability to wage an information war is one important cog in the strategic wheel, and is not only an intangible and abstract challenge, but one

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<sup>11</sup> Halper.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

senior leaders may not fully understand.<sup>13</sup> This research directly supports two of the U.S. Army Warfighting Challenges, which address enduring first-order problems and the proposed solutions to improve combat effectiveness in the current and future force.<sup>14</sup> These challenges include: (1) Developing Situational Understanding - How to develop and sustain a high degree of situational understanding while operating in complex environments against determined, adaptive enemy organizations; and (2) Shaping the Security Environment - How to shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint requirements.<sup>15</sup>

### Assumptions

The following facts, policies, and assumptions will remain the same for the foreseeable future, and were accepted as true by the writer prior to undertaking this research.

1. The United States and China share common economic interests and together comprise the majority of the global economy, but have profoundly different geopolitical perspectives, ideology and culture.

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<sup>13</sup> Christopher Ford, "Puncturing Beijing's Propaganda Bubble: Seven Themes," New Paradigms Forum, 2015, accessed March 30, 2017, <http://www.newparadigmsforum.com/NPFtestsite/?p=1993>.

<sup>14</sup> Army Capabilities Integration Center, "Army Warfighting Challenges," accessed January 31, 2017, [http://www.arcic.army.mil/App\\_Documents/AWFC-Current.pdf](http://www.arcic.army.mil/App_Documents/AWFC-Current.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

2. China is striving for growth and power informationally, economically and militarily.
3. China is skeptical of United States and alliances in the Asia-Pacific region.
4. China achieves objectives through the use of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) Instruments of National Power (IOP) in ways the U.S does not fully comprehend.
5. China is engaged in media warfare, carrying out war by other means.<sup>16</sup>

#### Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

Time available to conduct this thesis was limited to the Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) academic year, August 2016 – June 2017. Information and access to data was limited to unclassified and open source material. No funds were required for this research, and therefore no financial limitations exist. Research capability was based upon CGSC instruction, as well as two previous advanced academic degree programs and self-study.

This project is limited to the assessment of the following historical cases: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. The engagements will be viewed through the lens of strategic communication so the reader may gain a better understanding about how China operates in the IE. Cyber warfare data and/or assessments were not included as part of this thesis.

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<sup>16</sup> Halper.

### Significance of Study

This research may be used to improve military practice and effectiveness in the information environment by promoting awareness and insight about how China conducts its communication strategy. Additionally, this research may lead to better ways to analyze communication strategies and identify measurable effects resulting from communication strategies worldwide. Moreover, the results of this thesis illuminate a void in understanding the information operational environment or patterns related to China's military operations. Findings may inspire innovative approaches to counter and/or defend against China's actions if necessary. Finally, the results of this thesis could advance scholarship in the field of military art and science by increasing the capability to mitigate China's ability to wage a successful information war.<sup>17</sup>

Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the literature used for this thesis. The chapter contains the following sections: Strategic Communication (SC): An examination of SC; China's Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979; Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996; Chinese Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007; and Current Communication Strategy Related to China.

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<sup>17</sup> Ford.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: to what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007? Other subsidiary questions include: (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent?

This research is significant to the military profession and other scholars because current research suggests China masks intentions in the IE.<sup>18</sup> China achieves objectives through the use of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) National Instruments of Power (IOP) in ways United States leaders do not fully comprehend.<sup>19</sup> Countering China's ability to wage an information war is one important cog in the strategic wheel, and is not only an intangible and abstract challenge, but one senior leaders may not fully understand.<sup>20</sup> This research directly supports two of the U.S. Army Warfighting Challenges, which address enduring first-order problems and the proposed solutions to improve combat effectiveness in the current and future force.<sup>21</sup> These challenges include: (1) Developing Situational Understanding - How to develop and

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<sup>18</sup> Halper.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ford.

<sup>21</sup> Army Capabilities Integration Center.



sustain a high degree of situational understanding while operating in complex environments against determined, adaptive enemy organizations; and (2) Shaping the Security Environment - How to shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint requirements.<sup>22</sup>

This chapter is organized by the following topics: Strategic Communication: An examination of SC; China's Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979; Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996; Chinese Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007; and Current Communication Strategy Related to China. Additionally, literature review provides a thorough analysis of each engagement based upon credible research. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusions. Subsequent chapters provide analysis of each engagement in order to gain a better understanding about China's communication strategy.

#### Strategic Communication (SC): An examination of SC

The Department of Defense (DoD) defines SC as, "focused United States Government (USG) efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power."<sup>23</sup> The White House *National Framework for Strategic Communication* of 2010 describes SC as "(a) the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as (b) programs and activities

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016).

deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.”<sup>24</sup> SC advisors in the U.S. Department of State (DoS) describe SC as a set of messages coordinated using a whole-of-government approach, with allies and synchronized with all of the IOP—in both words and deeds.<sup>25</sup> These definition are relevant to this thesis because the USG uses multiple definitions and terms to describe SC, sometimes making it confusing to those unfamiliar with the field. Although elements of each of these definitions are adequate, this thesis focuses on one which is neutral and all-encompassing in an effort to avoid bias for one agency or another.

Christopher Paul, author of *Information Operations: Doctrine and Practice*, developed a working definition of SC which is the definition used for the purposes of this study. Paul defines SC as: “Coordinated actions, messages, images and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.” The core of this definition includes four main elements: (1) Informing, influencing, and persuading are important; (2) Effectively informing, influencing, and persuading requires clear objectives; (3) Coordination and de-confliction are necessary to avoid information fratricide; (4) Actions communicate.<sup>26</sup>

Optimally, SC must be synchronized – all parties must understand words, actions, and nuances matter, and contribute positively, neutrally, or negatively to the overarching

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<sup>24</sup> Christopher Paul, *Strategic Communication* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

SC goals.<sup>27</sup> In his book, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts and Current Debates*, Paul stated every soldier, sailor, Airman, and Marine has the ability to be a diplomat. Paul elaborated service member's daily interactions with the public provide the opportunity to articulate what the military is doing, why, and how what they do ties directly to national security interests. Paul believes men and women in uniform (and the rest of the government included) are competent and should be empowered to communicate – not just the designated spokespeople.<sup>28</sup>

SC is part of an overall communication effort which falls under the umbrella of Information Operations (IO).<sup>29</sup> Army Field Manual 3-13 describes IO as “the integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own.”<sup>30</sup> According to doctrine, IO includes, “integration and synchronization of information-related capabilities; planning, preparing, execution, and assessment; and the capability and capacity ensures the accomplishment of IO, to include the units and personnel responsible for its conduct.”<sup>31</sup> Public Diplomacy is referred to as efforts to build relationships, foster understanding, and promote engagement with foreign audiences,

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Department of the Army, FM 3-13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

according to Paul.<sup>32</sup> The relationship between PD, IO and other information efforts can cause confusion to military and civilian planners, so there must be an appropriate “firewall” as well as synchronization between overt and covert operations at all times.<sup>33</sup>

The two major departments responsible for SC are the DoS and DoD. The DoS handles state-to-state relations for the United States, and most PD efforts.<sup>34</sup> The DoS Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has the lead for SC.<sup>35</sup> Within the DoS there are five bureaus, which engage in SC: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; Bureau of International Information Programs; Bureau of Public Affairs; Rapid Response Unit; Bureau of Policy, Planning and Resources; Office of Private Sector Outreach.<sup>36</sup>

Constraints the DoS faces regarding SC include budgetary limitations; arduous and antiquated processes; and inadequate manning.<sup>37</sup> The DoS spends approximately \$1 billion annually on SC and has 3,000 personnel charged with the mission.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the DoD has a significantly larger budget, but due to definitional differences and the way DoD carries out the SC mission, it is difficult to quantify how much is allotted to SC

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<sup>32</sup> Paul.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

alone.<sup>39</sup> According to the *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy. Vol. 2*. "SC will play an increasingly important role in a unified approach to national security. DoD, in partnership with the DoS has begun to make strides in this area, and will continue to do so. However, we should recognize this is a weakness across the US Government and a coordinated effort must be made to improve the joint planning and implementation of SC."<sup>40</sup>

The DoD and DoS have worked to develop a collaborative relationship sharing ideas and information on SC. The following is a communication capability matrix describing the purpose, function, target, effect, dimension, and supporting capabilities of Strategic Communication, Information Operations, Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy. This is important in order to provide clarity regarding terminology, roles, capabilities and effects.<sup>41</sup> Table 1 provides a comparison of the aforementioned communication capabilities.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, vol. 2 (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Table 1. Communication Capability Comparison

	Purpose	Function	Target	Effect	Dimension	Supporting Capabilities
<b>Strategic Communication</b>	Create, strengthen, preserve conditions favorable	Focus efforts and synchronize	Key audience	Understand and Engage	Cognitive	PA, IO, DoS (coordinates) programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with DIME actions).
<b>Information Operations</b>	Influence, disrupt, usurp adversarial human automated decision making	Integrate	Adversary human and automated decision mak	Influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp	Physical, cognitive, informational	EW, CNO, MISO, MILDEC, OPSEC
<b>Public Affairs</b>	Educate and inform the public, and deter adversaries	Communicate times and factual unclassified information about DoD activities	Domestic and international publics	Inform and deter	Cognitive	Public information and command information, and community relations d
<b>Public Diplomacy</b>	Support and facilitate USG public diplomacy efforts	Support United States foreign policy objectives	Foreign audie and opinion makers	Understand, inform and influence	Cognitive	DoD activities and measures

Source: U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, vol. 2 (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 2009).

### China's Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979

In 1979 China invaded Vietnam following an escalation ensuing from clashes along the China-Vietnam border.<sup>42</sup> Additional aims of China included intervening in Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, where Vietnam was successfully putting an end to the China-backed Khmer Rouge regime.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, China hoped to destroy Hanoi's apparent hegemonic, territorial quest in Southeast Asia, and prove Soviet resolve was weak. China was unsuccessful in achieving the strategic objective to mitigate Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia, but was successful in sending a message to then-Soviet Union,

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<sup>42</sup> John W. Garver, "Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and the Sino-American Rapprochement," *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (Autumn 1981).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Vietnam's new ally, that the newfound partnership was not strong enough to deter China from aggression along the borders.<sup>44</sup>

China sought to “teach Vietnam a lesson” for Vietnam's expansionist ambitions, but learned many lessons about China's own shortfalls in the process.<sup>45</sup> China's Army, referred to as the People's Liberation Army (PLA), declared victory although military performance was poor.<sup>46</sup> Lessons learned from PLA's engagement with Vietnam urged China focus on becoming more prepared for limited warfare. Author Zhang Xioming wrote as a result of the conflict, China discovered a discrepancy in air power abilities, leading them to concentrate on building capability and assets in the air domain – which is now evident in China's sea and air fleets.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the land invasion into Vietnam demonstrated China's deliberate and calculated approach to warfare, and supported the idea China will strike if national security interests along the border are at stake.<sup>48</sup> Zhang wrote, China measures victory at the strategic level versus the operational level, keeping the long view in mind. Ultimately this conflict provoked China to make widespread changes to military doctrine, command and control, tactics and force structure.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Xiaoming Zhang, “China's 1979 War with Vietnam: A Reassessment,” *The China Quarterly*, 184 (December 2005), accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20192542>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

In the *Political Science Quarterly* article “Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and the Sino-American Rapprochement,” John W. Carver explained how the collapse of the Saigon government in 1975 and the resulting unification of North and South Vietnam drastically changed international relations in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>50</sup> These changes culminated in a territorial dispute with China. Carver claims although China and Vietnam had a problematic relationship, both countries vied for alliance with powers such as the United States and Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup>

Initially, Vietnam instigated rivalry between China and the Soviet Union compelling opposition toward the United States.<sup>52</sup> China sought to disrupt the growing partnership between the Soviet Union and Vietnam, ultimately decreasing U.S. and Soviet advances in the region. China used the media to discredit Vietnamese policy via *Jen Min Jih Pao* (*People’s Daily Newspaper*) revealing how Sino-Vietnamese relations deteriorated.<sup>53</sup> In a 1979 *China Quarterly* article written shortly after China’s invasion into Vietnam entitled, “China’s Vietnam War and Its Consequences,” writer Daniel Tretiak’s claims China's original goals for invading Vietnam were both political and military in nature in relation to strengthening China's role in regional international

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<sup>50</sup> Garver.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.



politics. The invasion affected China's perceived role in the global relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>54</sup>

In 1978, border tensions escalated between China and Vietnam, and *China News Agency* reports claimed Vietnamese forces were harassing Chinese civilians, military and throughout local towns. In addition to the border clashes, China was offended by Vietnam's interest in toppling Cambodia's Khmer Rouge government led by dictator, Pol Pot.<sup>55</sup> Following the fall of the Khmer Rouge, Chinese leaders began threatening to "teach Vietnam a lesson," while attempting to ally with the United States for power.<sup>56</sup>

China's Deng Xiaoping visited the United States as a symbol of partnership and interviewed with *Time* magazine, voicing China's desire to unify with the United States, attempting to build bilateral relations to elucidate China's position on geopolitics.<sup>57</sup> China continued shaping the narrative via media denouncing Vietnam's aggression toward Cambodia and openly repeated the message about teaching Vietnam a lesson via military force. United States leaders neither agreed nor disagreed publicly with China's anti-Soviet, anti-Vietnam remarks while in the U.S., which exacerbated Soviet dissent and isolated China.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Daniel Tretiak, "China's Vietnam War and Its Consequences," *The China Quarterly*, 80 (December 1979), accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/653041>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Tretiak claims China overestimated the probability of U.S. support. Deng attempted to gain support in Japan using a similar tactic, causing tension there as well. The United States and Japan's lack of clear disapproval may have indicated support to some leaders in China.<sup>59</sup> Then following highly publicized warnings to Vietnam, China attacked Vietnam.<sup>60</sup>

In a 2005 *China Quarterly* article, writer Zhang Xiaoming wrote China invaded Vietnam specifically to “teach Vietnam a lesson” it would not soon forget – a common theme in dialogue and news coverage. China also worked to weaken Soviet power in the region.<sup>61</sup> China's message was delivered worldwide by means of media and senior leader engagements. Zhang contends despite China's victory declaration, contemporary studies claim China's PLA performed poorly and the war did not go as planned.<sup>62</sup> The PLA suffered heavy casualties and had operational problems, according to Zhang.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to the land invasion, Deng Xiaoping visited Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and the United States to garner support for China's policy on Vietnam and to clearly state China would use force, albeit limited, against Vietnam if they intervened in Cambodia's Khmer Rouge.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile in China, the media market was saturated with editorials and commentaries condemning Vietnam's territorial clashes along the border

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Zhang.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

with China. Zhang wrote, analysts focused on internal clashes between Chinese leaders and Deng.<sup>65</sup> Zhang said nobody challenged Deng, who controlled China's military and the General Staff, regarding his plan to invade Vietnam.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, Zhang wrote, the internal "propaganda machine" was set in motion to persuade China's military that Deng's decision to go to war was necessary and just, stating "Vietnam had degenerated into the 'Cuba of the East, [and] the hooligans of Asia.'"<sup>67</sup> China's leaders expended energy on rhetoric to indoctrinate the military and population, to increase China's will, versus investing in training needed for combat efficiency. Despite China and Vietnam's shared Marxist political ideology, China decided to attack.

Finally, Zhang believed the PLA preferred to seize the initiative by deploying a superior force, and China measures success based upon long-term geopolitical outcomes versus operational performance on the battlefield.<sup>68</sup> Zhang did not believe China would repeat an invasion along the border with Vietnam.<sup>69</sup> The set of characteristics displayed by China during this conflict run counter to typical behavior.<sup>70</sup> The following paragraphs comprise a review of published literature concerning the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

### Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996

The Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996 refers to a series of missile tests and exercises conducted by China's military in the Straits along Taiwan's borders. The crisis reached its tipping point following a visit by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to his alma-mater, Cornell University, which China interpreted as United States support for Taiwan's goals for independence.<sup>71</sup> Following President Lee Teng-hui's visit, China's geopolitical tone changed.

Matthew Stumpf, *Preventative Defense Project* writer, believed the tests and exercises China conducted in the Straits were designed to inform Taiwan they were not pleased with the departure from "One-China policy."<sup>72</sup> China also desired to influence Taiwan's 1996 presidential election in China's favor.<sup>73</sup> Cross-Strait tensions were described as sensitive and explosive, where competing interests existed specifically between China and the United States.<sup>74</sup> Stumpf contends, China intended to coerce Taiwan into abandoning aspirations for a One-China policy and to challenge U.S. commitment.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Matthew Shannon Stumpf, "Preventing Inadvertent War: Problems and Prospects for Sino-American Crisis Management," *Preventative Defense Project* (July 2002).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Qimao Chen, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis: Its Crux and Solutions," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 11 (November 1996), accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2645635>.

<sup>75</sup> Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and The Use of Force," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000), accessed May 15, 2017, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/447725/pdf>.

Next, in his article, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Strategic Implication for the United States Navy,” author Douglas Porch, a professor of national security affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, examined the origins and events of the 1996 crisis in the Straits, the consequences of the crisis for Taiwan-China-U.S. relations, and the diplomatic and military effects moving into the future.<sup>76</sup> Porch claimed the source of the 1996 crisis was the political dynamic between China and Taiwan, specifically Taiwan’s attempts to become independent and reliant on U.S. support for independence.<sup>77</sup>

Porch also studied why Deng Xiaoping desired Taiwan’s reunification with mainland China.<sup>78</sup> China viewed Taiwan as slowly moving away from China’s goal for reunification as Li Denghui took over as Taiwan’s President in 1988.<sup>79</sup> In 1994 China held a conference to publicize the new strategy of “local war under high-technology conditions,” – also China’s analysis of the Gulf War – delivering the message the “PLA’s capabilities during a crisis would deter any enemy.”<sup>80</sup>

In 1995, relations stabilized between China and Taiwan.<sup>81</sup> Public rhetoric was firm yet civil even despite China’s messages on the use of force “against the schemes of

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<sup>76</sup> Douglas Porch, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Strategic Implications for the United States Navy,” *Naval War College Review*, 52 (Summer 1999), accessed May 8, 2017, <https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-44929257.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

foreign forces to interfere with China's reunification.”<sup>82</sup> However, the crucible occurred when U.S. government granted Li the visa to visit Cornell University in May 1995.

Beijing took great offense, and on July 18, 1996 China announced missile tests would be conducted from 21 to 28 July north of Taipei. China then fired 6 CSS-6/M-9 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) followed by a “guided missile and artillery firing exercise,” including 20 PLA ships and 40 aircraft which fired anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles.<sup>83</sup>

Simultaneously, China conducted an underground nuclear test. Shortly after, China executed an amphibious exercise off the coast of Dongtan Island and made public announcements about intentions to conduct more exercises, which would take place at the same time as Taiwan's presidential elections.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, according to Porch, the elections returned candidates favorable to China-Taiwan reconciliation, right as the United States military responded by sending the USS *Nimitz* through the Strait.<sup>85</sup> China delivered public messages labeling the act as hostile. In return, the PLA commenced Exercise Operation Express 60, moving missiles toward Taiwan's, announcing more missiles would be fired across important air and sea lanes.<sup>86</sup>

On March 8, 1996, three M-9s were fired and landed within 20 miles of Taiwan. The U.S. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), Secretary of State and National Security Advisor met with China's vice minister of foreign affairs to deliver a “crystal clear,

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

strong and unambiguous message,” presumed to have made it to the top of the chain of command. Immediately following the message, China announced another launch would take place March 9.<sup>87</sup> Next, the SECDEF met with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and with Presidential approval, ordered the USS *Independence* battle group toward Taiwan. In response, China’s foreign ministry spokesmen “promised Chinese forces would ‘resort to non-peaceful means’ if foreign forces attempted to ‘invade’ Taiwan—quite different from the original message which was a “blanket threat” against those interfering with China and Taiwan’s reunification.<sup>88</sup>

Porch thought the U.S. show-of-force did not serve as a deterrent, due to the fact a fourth missile was fired on March 13 prior to heavy air and sea exercises.<sup>89</sup> Porch also wrote China’s goals for the exercises were to solidify the PLA’s control of the party and to intimidate Taiwan. He explained Washington and Beijing’s relationship was defined by the “three communiques,” of 1972, 1979 and 1982 where National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger accepted the One-China policy supporting eventual reunification.<sup>90</sup> Porch said Taiwan will continue to be a source of tension in the region and will affect the security environment in the future.<sup>91</sup> Porch argued the Strait crisis accentuated Beijing’s

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

stance it will use force, and PRC aggression may be asserted if U.S. leaders lack the resolve to support Taiwan.<sup>92</sup>

In the University of California Press, *Asian Survey* article, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis: Its Crux and Solutions,” writer, Qimao Chen said the March 1996 confrontation the most serious since 1958’s Kinmen crisis.<sup>93</sup> He described how China deployed 150,000 troops to the Fujian Province and conducted three consecutive large-scale exercises near Taiwan.<sup>94</sup> Chen said the United States became involved immediately sending two aircraft carrier battle groups, and accused China of being “reckless” and “provocative.”<sup>95</sup> Following Taiwan’s Presidential elections, China ended the exercises and the United States moved the carrier groups away from the Straits. Chen also described the root cause of the clash as Lee Teng-Hui’s visit to the United States in 1995.<sup>96</sup> Chen said before the visit, the Straits were peaceful, but following the visit relations deteriorated. Therefore, he blamed conflicting policy guidelines regarding the “one country, two systems” approach as the root cause of the crisis.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Qimao.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



Chen also claimed the U.S.'s "One-China" policy is out-of-date and requires change.<sup>98</sup> While China showed resolve to avoid conflict, research indicates China will not back away from using force when protecting sovereignty and independence.<sup>99</sup>

Boston College Political Science Professor, Robert Ross explains in his *International Security* article, "The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," due to the White House approval of then Taiwan President, Lee Teng-hui's visit to Cornell University, China viewed the U.S. policy as possibly leaning toward support for Taiwan's aims for independence.<sup>100</sup> Since China directly stated they would use military force if Taiwan tried to gain independence from China for 45 years prior to the visit, the visit was seen as provocative and disconcerting to China. Taiwan's goal of independence would lead to renewed tensions and possibly war.<sup>101</sup> Following the visit China displayed what Ross described as a dramatic show of force comprised of military exercises and missile tests near Taiwan.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile U.S. officials responded by deploying two carrier battle groups to the area, marking the closest the United States and China would come to war since the 1960s.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ross.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

The military posturing served as a turning point in U.S. and China relations post-Cold War.<sup>104</sup> While Ross argued the confrontation influenced the Clinton administration to back away from building U.S.-Taiwan relations, opposing Taiwan's independence, he argued both China and the United States achieved strategic objectives as a result of the confrontation.<sup>105</sup> Ross claimed the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis was an example of Chinese coercive diplomacy where China threatened consequences until both Taiwan and the United States changed policy. On the other hand, the United States used deterrence diplomacy to communicate to both Chinese and regional leader's strategic commitments and resolve were credible, purely reputational objectives – and Ross therefore believes both China and the United States reached strategic aims.<sup>106</sup> More information about the crisis was provided in Suisheng Zhao's book, as described in the following paragraphs.

In *Across the Taiwan Strait*, which was written during a timeframe where cross-Strait tensions between Taiwan and mainland China were at an all-time high, and where cultural and economic integration were hindered by, Zhao argued China's government was heavy-handed.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Zhao examined Beijing's Taiwan policy from the perspective of Chinese scholar, You Ji, to illuminate the motives of Beijing's leaders at the time.<sup>108</sup> Ji explained the primary reason for China's series of exercises in the Strait

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "Across the Taiwan Strait: Mainland China, Taiwan and the 1995-1996 Crisis," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (August 2001), accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.2307/3182341?journalCode=tcyj>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

was to send a message to Taiwan, pursuits for independence would come with consequences.<sup>109</sup> Ji concluded China was successful in “brinkmanship in the Taiwan Strait,” because China was able to “use Taiwan as a vehicle to promote state-centric nationalism to replace the declining communism as official state ideology.”<sup>110</sup> Zhao supported this argument, and concluded the Taiwan Strait Crisis shifted China’s policy with Taiwan from a “peaceful offense” to a “coercive strategy.”<sup>111</sup> The following paragraphs contain a review of published literature related to the Chinese Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007.

#### Chinese Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007

In January 2007, China conducted the nation’s first successful direct-Ascent Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons test demonstrating the ability to destroy a satellite in space.<sup>112</sup> China received international protests following the test for disrupting civil space area, and dispersing a debris cloud jeopardizing safety in Low Earth Orbit (LOE).<sup>113</sup> China scholars believed Beijing’s dependence on space-based capabilities for military purposes

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Shirley Kan, *China’s Anti-Satellite Weapon Test* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 2007), accessed May 17, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22652.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

would continue to make great increases, leading to challenges in arms control or restraint in space weapons development.<sup>114</sup>

In an April 23, 2007 *Congressional Research Service's* report, Shirley Kan reported details relaying on January 11, 2007, the PLA conducted China's first successful ASAT SC-19 weapons test.<sup>115</sup> China used a land-based, medium-range ballistic missile fired from a mobile transporter-erector-launcher (TEL), and destroyed one of China's own satellites in space.<sup>116</sup> On January 18, 2007, a National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson provided the White House's official response to the test stating, "China's development and testing of such weapons is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperation both countries aspire to in the civil space area."<sup>117</sup> Not only did United States officials object to the test, but nations such as Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan lodged formal protests.<sup>118</sup> Conversely, Kan noted, Russia "downplayed" the test in an effort to counter international sentiment.<sup>119</sup> A PLA officer from China's Arms Control Disarmament Association said China's lack of communication with the public prior to the test was out of the ordinary, and if China was

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<sup>114</sup> Phillip C Saunders and Charles D. Lutes, "China's ASAT Test Motivations and Implications" (National Defense University, 2007, accessed May 15, 2017, <https://digitalndulibrary.ndu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/ndupress/id/21695>).

<sup>115</sup> Kan.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

attempting to use the test as a “bargaining chip,” Chinese officials would have made a public announcement.<sup>120</sup>

Written just eight days following China’s ASAT weapons test in the *Federation of American Scientist*, Hans M. Kristensen reported of the “alleged” test, as it was released first in *Aviation Week and Space Technology* magazine.<sup>121</sup> Kristensen described how on the very same day as the test, January 11, a senior DoS official briefed a group of U.S. Air Force leaders “there is no arms race in space that needs to be addressed,” – a direct contradiction to the ASAT test.<sup>122</sup> Kristensen explained although the test was a surprise, it was expected by U.S. officials.<sup>123</sup> In 2006, DoD officials stated in a report:

Beijing continues to pursue an offensive anti-satellite system. China can currently destroy or disable satellites only by launching a ballistic missile or space-launch vehicle armed with a nuclear weapon. However, there are many risks associated with this method, and potentially adverse consequences from the use of nuclear weapons. Evidence exists China is improving situational awareness in space, which will give it the ability to track and identify most satellites. Such capability will allow for the de-confliction of Chinese satellites, and would also be required for offensive actions. At least one of the satellite attack systems appears to be a ground-based laser designed to damage or blind imaging satellites.<sup>124</sup>

Kristensen argued there is indeed an arms race in space as a result of the ASAT test.<sup>125</sup> He claimed the Bush administration’s national security policy failed because the

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Hans M Kristensen, “Chinese Anti-Satellite Weapon Experiment; What Now?” Federation of American Scientists, accessed May 15, 2017, [https://fas.org/blogs/security/2007/01/chinese\\_anti-satellite\\_weapon\\_](https://fas.org/blogs/security/2007/01/chinese_anti-satellite_weapon_).

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

policy did not limit military space activities, which eventually led to the ASAT test.<sup>126</sup> Kristensen argued the United States' pursuit of military space capability has not deterred other nations from joining the race.<sup>127</sup> Finally, he contended China must reaffirm support for a peaceful use of space, the United States and Russia need to resist the temptation to instigate a space arms race, and Congress must review the policy on space, specifically developing international dialogue on the rules of military and civilian use of space.<sup>128</sup>

In his monograph, "Assessing Chinese Intentions for the Military Use of the Space Domain," Army Major Paul S. Oh, School of Advanced Military Studies, argued China's 2007 ASAT test was a "smoking gun" which proved hostile intent in space.<sup>129</sup> He argued the decision to test the ASAT was in response to America's dominance in space, and a diplomatic strategy to influence the U.S. leaders to negotiate a treaty for space "weaponization."<sup>130</sup> Oh suggested China did not accomplish strategic objective because the U.S. military responded with an even more complex, sophisticated satellite intercept from a submarine.<sup>131</sup>

National Strategic Studies Senior Research Fellows, Phillip C. Saunders and Charles D. Lutes analyzed China's motivations and implications following the 2007

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Paul S. Oh, "Assessing Chinese Intentional for the Military Use of the Space Domain" (School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 2011).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

ASAT weapons test.<sup>132</sup> Saunders and Lutes discovered China removed the words of “preventing an arms race in outer space,” from a 2006 White Paper, and China did not sign The Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation.<sup>133</sup> The writers highlighted the fact it took two months following the ASAT launch before China’s Prime Minister Wen Jiabao made a public announcement.<sup>134</sup> The first public announcement declared China’s peaceful intentions in space and a commitment toward negotiating a peace treaty for space.<sup>135</sup>

The 12-day silence following the test combined with disjointed messaging, to include a denial of the weapons test altogether by the military, indicated a lack of communication strategy and coordination internally – and possibly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was not aware of the test.<sup>136</sup> The first MFA statement following the test declared “this test was not directed at any country and does not constitute a threat to any country.”<sup>137</sup> Saunders and Lutes said China miscalculated the international response to the weapons test, which led to massive criticism.<sup>138</sup> The timing of the test was not as significant as the key messages China sent, to include a warning China was

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<sup>132</sup> Saunders and Lutes.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

now a contender in space, and any intervention on behalf of Taiwan would become increasingly risky.<sup>139</sup>

Saunders and Lutes predict as China becomes increasingly reliant on “informationalization,” they will rely heavily on space capability.<sup>140</sup> The writers highlighted the fact a lack of transparency in China’s test exacerbated the negative response across the globe.<sup>141</sup> Lastly, the director of the National Reconnaissance Office stated China lasers demonstrated the capability to “paint U.S. satellites, which demonstrates the ability to disrupt imaging satellites by dazzling or blinding them,” which, again, runs counter to China’s messaging, and further supports a non-peaceful use of space.<sup>142</sup>

#### Current Communication Strategy Related to China

Although the exact term strategic communication is not used often in Chinese rhetoric, China has an intensive informational strategy, sculpting the narrative to gain advantage in the IE. Terms like information warfare, media warfare, military communication and diplomatic communication are more commonly used in China, but ultimately amount to what is referred to as strategic communication in the U.S. Communication practices in China differ from the U.S. principally because China maintains censorship and control of its media, whereas the U.S. exercises freedom of the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.



press, a right protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In an *Office of Net Assessment* document entitled, “China: The Three Warfares,” project director and University of Cambridge Professor, Steven Halper described China’s media strategy as one designed to “preserve friendly morale; generate public support at home and abroad; weaken an enemy’s will to fight, and alter an enemy’s situational assessment.”<sup>143</sup>

Foreign relations expert, Christopher Ford, describes China’s informational objectives and proposes U.S. responses in his review, “Puncturing Beijing’s Propaganda Bubble: Seven Themes,” published in the *New Paradigms Forum* in 2015.<sup>144</sup> Ford argues the PRC sees itself as at war against the values of the West, stating Chinese elite are focused on China’s return to imperial power from 19th century decline.<sup>145</sup> Ford refers to China’s efforts toward revamping legitimacy following the *Tiananmen* massacre as “jingoistic nationalism,” and posits China has taken advantage of America’s current financial, and strategic losses to bolster territorial claims, posturing for a return to global power.<sup>146</sup>

Ford recommended a way for U.S. leaders to counter China’s aims is through a communication strategy “puncturing” China’s current narrative, countering propaganda via seven themes.”<sup>147</sup> Ford claimed Chinese narratives illuminate strategic objectives by identifying what China fears the most, and what China thinks they need in order to be

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ford.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

seen as powerful.<sup>148</sup> This is important for this thesis because Ford provided a way to understand and approach the IE with regard to China. Ford argued these insights can provide a “targeting algorithm,” and the following are his suggested themes and messages:

“Problematize the prosperity narrative” – Ford said China publicizes success of enabling millions of Chinese to emerge from poverty, bolstering economic growth. To counter this claim, Ford recommended U.S. leaders point out China’s growth is attributed to “shocking inequalities,” filled with environmental damage, low consumer product safety, all built upon fraud and corruption.<sup>149</sup>

“Discredit Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ‘meritocracy’” – Party officials want the world to believe China’s leaders are carefully selected based upon stringent educational, technological and managerial standards.<sup>150</sup> To counter this claim, Ford recommended the United States publicize the corrupt system exists and is essential to running the CCP. Ford argued Chinese citizens are aware of the brutality within the ranks, but what they allow in the public says otherwise.<sup>151</sup>

“See the Party as the problem” – The CCP has China convinced the Party alone is capable of building a China able to rise as the world power.<sup>152</sup> To counter this claim, Ford recommended describing how the Party is actually the problem versus the

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

solution.<sup>153</sup> Ford also claimed China seeks not to be seen as a bully in the region, but as a virtuous power, however, they are ruled by a group who “jails human rights lawyers, abuses ethnic minorities, and refuses to subscribe to popular accountability or electoral choice.”<sup>154</sup> Overall, Ford claims, the Party is the obstacle to China’s goal of global respect.<sup>155</sup>

“Show that real democracy is feasible for Chinese” – CCP claimed China is unfit and not suited for democratic liberalism.<sup>156</sup> To counter this theme, Ford suggested pointing out the success Taiwan has had as a democracy. Taiwanese are not subject to oppression as Chinese neighbors are.<sup>157</sup>

“Discredit the global vision” – Ford described how the PRC retorts “a new model of great power relations,” and emphasizes a desire for “win-win” solutions and “mutual respect.”<sup>158</sup> However, Ford believed in reality China works toward a Sinocentric and moralistically oppressive ambition, and if the idea of harmony reflects the way they unified Tibetans and Uighurs under Chinese control, then said ambition will closely resemble the Zhou dynasty period.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

“Point out historical bellicosity” – Ford claimed the CCP thinks of itself as a “peaceful, pacifistic and Confucian culture,” where they would only use military force as the last resort to solve foreign policy problems.<sup>160</sup> The example CCP commonly uses is the Indian Ocean voyages of 15th-century Admiral Zheng He, where China looked for win-win solutions versus domination like the West.<sup>161</sup> Ford argued the following:

Why not publicize accurate historical accounts of the important role of war and conquest in Chinese history? Why not highlight the role that forcible ‘chastisement’ of barbarian temerity played in the statecraft endorsed by traditional Confucian ethics? Why not counter every romanticized reference to Zheng He with real historical accounts of his coercive gunboat diplomacy on behalf of the Ming Dynasty – which included military muscle-flexing, intervention in local civil wars on behalf of pro-Chinese factions, and an actual invasion of Sri Lanka in which he took an unfriendly local ruler back to China in chains? Whenever relative power gave it coercive options, the Middle Kingdom was no less heavy-handed in the treatment of other peoples than any other empire in human history, and the modern targets of Party-State propaganda about China’s historical ‘pacifism’ deserve the truth.<sup>162</sup>

“Problematize the ‘eternal’ China” – Ford described another CCP propaganda theme, and is China’s “fixation upon China’s supposedly eternal and inalterable territory – not least with respect to areas such as Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan, which are said ‘always’ to have been part of China.”<sup>163</sup> Ford countered this theme by outlining China’s misapplication of history, and how there is no “always” in China.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, he highlighted Mao Zedong’s statement in the 1930s Taiwan is not a part of China, which is

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

the opposite of what leaders in China say today.<sup>165</sup> To conclude, Ford contended the United States should do more in the area of public diplomacy and media relations, and his counter-themes actually bring truth to the public and there would be no need to distort the facts to counter what he perceives as a CCP propaganda campaign against the United States.<sup>166</sup>

Halper offered an in-depth explanation of “Three Warfares,” China’s three-dimensional, dynamic process of “war by other means,” in his study.<sup>167</sup> Three Warfares is a CCP controlled plan reflecting an era of Chinese innovation.<sup>168</sup> The plan is considered highly deceptive, and moves beyond the cliché “hearts and minds” paradigm and kinetic warfare from which the West is accustomed.<sup>169</sup> China’s long-term goal in “Three Warfares” is to alter the strategic environment in a way which renders kinetic engagement irrational.<sup>170</sup>

To zero in on the media aspect of “Three Warfares,” Halper uncovered China is engaged in constant media activity to influence perceptions and attitudes using all platforms which leverage this aim, including movies, television, books, internet, and global news organizations.<sup>171</sup> The two primary media outlets used to target Chinese

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Halper.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

citizens include *Xinhua* and *CCTV*. Halper defines Chinese media warfare as, “influencing domestic and international public opinion to build support for China’s military actions and dissuade an adversary from pursuing actions contrary to China’s interests.”

Halper contends China’s four goals of media warfare are: (1) Preserve friendly morale; (2) Generate public support at home and abroad; (3) Weaken an enemy’s will to fight; and (4) Alter an enemy’s situational assessment.<sup>172</sup> In order to achieve these goals, PLA, CCP leaders and Chinese strategists follow the “Four Pillars of Media.”<sup>173</sup> The “Four Pillars of Media” and four goals of media warfare are used as measurement criteria for this thesis.

Follow top-down guidance” – Media warfare must align content and timing with national strategy as outlined by the CCP, and CMC.<sup>174</sup>

“Emphasize pre-emption” – China seeks to be the first to dominate the airwaves in order to “underscore the justice and necessity of its operations, accentuate national strength, and exhibit the superiority of its forces, while also undermining the enemy’s will to resist.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

“Be flexible and responsive to changing conditions” – China adjusts operations in order to address specific political or military circumstances toward political audiences or global publics.<sup>176</sup>

“Exploit all available resources” – Pursue civilian-military integration during peacetime and wartime to leverage news organizations.<sup>177</sup>

According to Halper, the four pillars of media warfare are used during offensive and defensive operations.<sup>178</sup> The emphasis for offense is on pillar 2, which “emphasizes pre-emption to establish advantage with regards to media.”<sup>179</sup> Defense is used to promptly counter an opponent’s media efforts, to counter messages Chinese citizens have been exposed to, and ensure the public psyche is still the way China’s leaders want it.<sup>180</sup> This is important in understanding the IE, and how to defend against information warfare tactics.

Halper also disclosed the communication model he believes China uses to achieve objectives during a crisis, known as the incident-specific communication strategy, which will also be used as measurement criteria for this thesis. The elements are as follows:

“Establishing China’s version of the incident” – At the start of each crisis China’s leaders issue a statement to establish China’s position on exactly what happened.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 73.

“Statement of principles for resolution of the incident” – Reaffirming specific principles and China’s commitment to citizens via broadcasts, targeted by both foreign and domestic audiences.<sup>182</sup>

“Shut down unofficial, but normal information channels”– Chinese leaders gain information control to continuously shape and frame the situation, which tends to happen once a “probable crisis begins.”<sup>183</sup>

“Emphasize Beijing’s commitment to the US-China relationship” – China expresses commitment to US-China relations while implying the United States is to blame for the crisis at hand, in turn serving as a test for U.S. goodwill and intent.<sup>184</sup>

According to Halper, China analysts have also uncovered elements of deception during “perception management campaigns,” as indicated:

“Manipulation of pre-existing beliefs – Instead of presenting false information to convince the audience, the effort is placed on convincing the audience to buy in to the altered beliefs.”<sup>185</sup>

“Concept of conditioning” – Continuous and gradual presentation of information is the most effective way to alter perceptions.<sup>186</sup>

“Use as much accurate information as possible” – Use factual information to gain credibility to influence an opponent.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.



“Use feedback mechanisms” – Measure results to discover whether perception management is working.<sup>188</sup>

“Closely monitor effects” – Identify and eliminate any unintended consequences of perception management campaign.<sup>189</sup>

“Overall design” – The perception management campaign must be mapped out prior to execution to synchronize information to the adversary – timing is critical.<sup>190</sup>

Harper annotated themes China is projected to use as a part of media warfare efforts: <sup>191</sup> Themes and messages include: “The U.S. does not respect Chinese domestic law; The U.S. is to blame for the incident; Such incidents are domestic matters and within China’s domestic law enforcement jurisdiction, and thus not a matter for diplomacy or international discussion; and the U.S. does not value the bilateral relationship with China.”<sup>192</sup> Halper’s analysis identified patterns within the style, content and structure used in China’s communication strategy.

Lastly, Halper believed China uses thematic frames to establish the incident as it relates to global power, and the threat it poses to Chinese interests, and manipulates terminology to gain an advantage.<sup>193</sup> Halper warned China will attempt to back up

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 74-76.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

actions with “legal” justifications.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, China will turn off all information channels and keep only tightly controlled lines open and available, according to Halper.<sup>195</sup> China will issue dramatic protests in order to foster the perception of tolerance and peacefulness toward an opponent, and tries to place the United States on the defensive by testing resolve. China relies on the West’s commitment to media objectivity to report prefabricated “false equivalency” of objective news. In other words, China lets the West do the bidding, delivering the message which will make China’s perception management efforts successful.<sup>196</sup>

In “China’s New Military Strategy: ‘Winning Informationized Local Wars,’” China World Program Fellow, Taylor Favel described China’s evolving military strategy.<sup>197</sup> Favel outlined in a 2015 Defense White Paper, Chinese leaders summarized the current national security situation stating the “form of war” has changed.<sup>198</sup> According to Favel, “the development of the world revolution in military affairs is deepening” while “the form of war is accelerating its transformation to informationization.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>197</sup> Favel.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

The white paper described how China no longer views information as an, “important condition in warfare,” but now thinks it plays a “dominant role.”<sup>200</sup> These changes were driven by trends toward development and use of long-range, precision, smart and unmanned weapons and equipment – where China places highest emphasis on space and cyber domains as “commanding heights of strategic competition.”<sup>201</sup> As China strives to become capable of “winning informationized local wars,” China is also in the midst of updating doctrine and organization in a move toward more of a joint approach to warfare.<sup>202</sup>

Chinese expert, and father of Information Warfare (IW) Dr. Shen Weiguang, has defined IW as: “struggles in which two sides use the tools of information technology to obtain, control, and use information; war aimed at capturing information space and seizing information resources; the confrontation between two opposing groups in the information area in the course of an armed conflict; People’s War under high-tech conditions.”<sup>203</sup> Dr. Weiguang specified the purpose of IW for the Chinese is control. The following provides terminology used in Chinese language, which may help in understanding how Chinese people think and communicate.

Because words matter, it is relevant to take note of the terminology used in China’s communication strategy, and what it may indicate. *Ba*, the Chinese equivalent of

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Timothy L. Thomas, *Dragon Bytes: Chinese Information-War Theory and Practice from 1995-2003* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2004).

the English word, “hegemon” is used in reference to surpassing the United States.<sup>204</sup> *Goujian* is the Chinese word describing the rising challenger who aspires to become the ruler of the world – China.<sup>205</sup> *Shi*, as previously mentioned, is a Chinese word for deceiving others into doing China’s bidding, waiting for the point of maximum opportunity to strike.<sup>206</sup> Stratagems refer to China’s military strategy – the war planning employed by the two opposing combatants to be used at different levels of military strategy, military campaign, and military tactics in order to obtain victory.<sup>207</sup> A military stratagem is a product of the development of war, the concrete manifestation of human subjective actions upon material forces.<sup>208</sup> The term reflects the general principles of military struggles, possessing a corresponding stable nature and vigorous liveliness.<sup>209</sup> China’s communication strategy, coupled with rhetoric commonly used in doctrine indicate China’s desire to rise in power through deceptive means. These terms are important because words really do matter, and in order to gain a better understanding sometimes one must look through the lens of another culture. The next few paragraphs synopsise the literature review.

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<sup>204</sup> Pillsbury.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

## Summary

Strategic Communication plays a vital role in U.S. national security. Paul's definition of SC, "Coordinated actions, messages, images and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives," is both thorough and objective. If DoD, DoS and other applicable agencies can continue to improve collaboration and synchronization in messaging, the United States will gain public trust and support, as well as strategic advantage. If fiscal and manning constraints are not mitigated in both DoD and DoS, U.S. SC planning and execution may become increasingly disjointed, and ineffective. Furthermore, service members should be prepared to speak on a unified front, explaining their purpose, keeping OPSEC in mind, whether they are official spokespeople or not. This is especially important as globalization continues to rise, and warfare becomes more complex and hybrid in character. SC requires a whole-of-government approach, with trained, capable, and culturally-aware information practitioners.

China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007 were engagements initiated by China, capturing worldwide attention – and each of them involved communication strategy. China's land invasion of Vietnam in 1979 had a communication strategy prior to, and during the engagement via senior leader engagements and media. China's 2007 ASAT missile test did not have a communication strategy, but had a reactive and hasty communication strategy following the launch. Inversely, China had a communication strategy before and during the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996.

China currently has a robust and ongoing media warfare campaign where the CCP and PLA closely manage perceptions and manipulate information release and timing to gain strategic advantage. Although the term strategic communication is not used often in Chinese rhetoric, China has a robust communication strategy. Communication practices in China differ from the U.S. mainly because China maintains censorship and control of the media, where the U.S. has freedom of the press.

China's communication strategy has evolved since the aforementioned engagements took place. Although China views its actions as peaceful, and win-win in nature, China's information efforts are now more organized and aggressive than before. China no longer views information as simply an "important condition in warfare," but believes information now plays a "dominant role."<sup>210</sup> China uses aggressive tactics showing it is actively working to prevail in the information domain.

Subsequent chapters provide an analysis of each engagement in order to gain a better understanding about China's communication strategy. The chapters also provide analysis on indicators regarding China's actions in the future. The research methodology is outlined in chapter 3, and findings and conclusions are provided in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid .

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this thesis is a qualitative content analysis of three military engagements initiated by China, from the strategic communication perspective, in order to gain a better understanding of how China operates in the IE.<sup>211</sup> The data gathered from the literature review was analyzed using measurements based upon Chinese communication strategy models.<sup>212</sup> A qualitative content analysis methodology was used to address the primary research questions, which include: to what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007? Other subsidiary questions include: (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent? Qualitative content analysis can be defined as a method of research where a subjective interpretation of data from textual content is evaluated in order to identify and make sense of themes or patterns.<sup>213</sup>

Chapter 3 provides a thorough explanation of the methodology used for this research. To begin, the chapter addresses how the data was gathered and outlines the

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<sup>211</sup> Yan Zhang and Barbara M. Widemuth, "Qualitative Analysis of Content," University of Texas School of Information, accessed January 10, 2017, [https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~yanz/Content\\_analysis.pdf](https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~yanz/Content_analysis.pdf).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

methodology steps. Then the chapter concludes with the criteria used to evaluate and validate the qualitative content analysis methodology.

### Research

Research for this thesis was conducted via the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) using the CARL academic database. All sources were vetted for credibility, and include scholarly journals, books, news and magazine articles, student papers and in-depth, peer-reviewed academic studies from leading experts in the field. Each source was carefully examined for relevance based upon content, as well as the date and timing of the release. This research does not involve human subjects.

### Methodology Steps

The first step in this methodology was an analysis of three selected engagements from a historical and SC perspective. The engagements include: China's land invasion of Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. This step addresses the communication strategy findings and the primary and subsidiary questions (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent?

Additionally, each engagement was measured against three models China uses to assess their own communication strategy. These three models are based upon Steven Halper's Office of Net Assessment research on China's approach to warfare.<sup>214</sup> The models and measurement criteria include:

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<sup>214</sup> Halper.



1. Incident-Specific Communication Strategy: (1) Establishing China's version of the incident; (2) Statement of principles for resolution of the incident; (3) Shut down unofficial, but normal Information channels; (4) Emphasize Beijing's commitment to the U.S.-China relationship.<sup>215</sup>
2. China's Four Pillars of Media: (1) Follow top-down guidance; (2) Emphasize pre-emption; (3) Be flexible and responsive to changing conditions or global publics (4) Exploit all available resources.<sup>216</sup>
3. China's Four Goals of Media Warfare: (1) Preserve friendly morale; (2) Generate public support at home and abroad; (3) Weaken an enemy's will to fight; and (4) Alter an enemy's situational assessment.<sup>217</sup>

By examining three engagements, this methodology involved triangulating the findings, linking data with analysis to make meaning of the concepts and context of the research.<sup>218</sup> Reviewing multiple data sources, which included reports, news articles, scholarly journal articles, books, student papers and in-depth, peer-reviewed academic studies increased the credibility and validity of the research.<sup>219</sup> The final step in this qualitative content analysis involved deconstructing the findings thereby illuminating patterns about how China operates in the information domain. This research methodology

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<sup>215</sup> Halper.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016).

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

presents an objective view of trends in China's information realm for possible use in future operations. Findings based upon this methodology were feasible to answer the questions presented in this thesis.

### Validation Criteria

Criteria used to evaluate the validity of this method are as follows: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.<sup>220</sup> The aforementioned engagements span three decades and occurred on land, in sea and space, which provides suitable representation improving the credibility of the research. The research method used in this thesis can be replicated to interpret Chinese communication strategies of the future, which enhances the transferability of this thesis. Furthermore, findings of this research meet dependability criteria based upon the selection of comparable engagements with consistent characteristics such as being initiated by China, and being of international news interest. Confirmability is determined based upon a thorough literature review and analysis of documentation available for this thesis.

Most importantly, this research directly supports two of the U.S. Army Warfighting Challenges.<sup>221</sup> Current research suggests China masks intentions in the IE, and China achieves objectives through the use of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) National Instruments of Power (IOP) in ways United States leaders do not fully comprehend.<sup>222</sup> Countering China's ability to wage an information war is one

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Army Capabilities Integration Center.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

important cog in the strategic wheel, and is not only an intangible and abstract challenge, but one senior leaders may not understand.<sup>223</sup> The warfighting challenges this research supports includes: (1) Developing Situational Understanding - How to develop and sustain a high degree of situational understanding while operating in complex environments against determined, adaptive enemy organizations; and (2) Shaping the Security Environment - How to shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint requirements.<sup>224</sup>

Chapter 3 provided a thorough explanation of the methodology used for this research. The chapter addressed how the data was gathered, outlined the methodology steps, and concluded with the criteria used to evaluate and validate the qualitative content analysis methodology. Chapter 4 provides the content analysis based on the qualitative content analysis method.

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<sup>223</sup> Ford.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this thesis, and attempts to answer the primary research questions which include: to what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007? Other subsidiary questions include: (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent? The chapter begins by addressing the primary and subsidiary questions and describes the communication strategy for each engagement in the following order: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. The remaining portion of the chapter provides further analysis using models based upon Steven Halper's Office of Net Assessment research on China's approach to warfare, which includes: China's incident-specific communication strategy; China's four pillars of media; and China's four goals of media warfare.<sup>225</sup>

#### China's Land Invasion into Vietnam in 1979

China's Deng Xiaoping had a communication strategy prior to and during the land invasion into Vietnam in 1979, but it did not reach the desired intent. China's communication strategy was developed in advance and executed through domestic and international media via senior leader engagements, which is considered as customary for

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

China. Prior to China's land invasion into Vietnam, Vietnam and Soviet relations were growing while Sino-Vietnamese relations were on the decline. At this point, China began to use the media to discredit Vietnamese policy.<sup>226</sup>

In 1978 as clashes along the border began to escalate, China made announcements, via media, claiming Vietnamese forces were harassing Chinese civilians, military, and towns – setting the stage for China's invasion. Additionally, Deng Xiaoping visited the United States as a symbol of partnership, attempting to ally with the United States for power prior to invading, continuing public narrative denouncing Vietnam's aggression. China's leaders proclaimed they wanted to “teach Vietnam a lesson” through military force for territorial aims and for fighting China-backed Khmer Rouge forces.<sup>227</sup> This theme was delivered worldwide, propagated via media and senior leader engagements.

Moreover, an internal “propaganda machine” was ignited to persuade Chinese military members Deng's decision to invade was just.<sup>228</sup> The outcome of China's communication strategy included lack of U.S. support and inflamed Soviet relations. China did not achieve the desired intent to build an alliance and support with the United States prior to invading, nor did it effectively increase the will of the populace and/or warfighter prior to the invasion.<sup>229</sup> The PLA performed poorly, failed operationally and suffered heavy casualties. Meanwhile, China attempted to control public perceptions by

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<sup>226</sup> Garver.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Zhang, “China's 1979 War with Vietnam: A Reassessment.”

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

reporting (false) positive results via media, to no avail. Ultimately China learned lessons in operational deficiencies inspiring improved doctrine, and experts do not believe China will invade Vietnam again.<sup>230</sup>

### Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996

The Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996 refers to a series of missile tests and exercises conducted by China's military in the Straits along Taiwan's borders. Deng Xiaoping had a complex, aggressive communication strategy prior to and during the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996, and it reached the desired intent. China's communication strategy was developed and executed through domestic and international media and senior leader engagements, coupled with carefully timed military engagements in order to achieve strategic objectives.

The crisis reached its tipping point following Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's visit to his alma-mater, Cornell University, which China interpreted as U.S. support for Taiwan and the aims for independence.<sup>231</sup> In the years leading up to the crisis, Deng set the stage for strategic intentions in the region. In 1994, China held a conference to publicize the new strategy of "local war under high-technology conditions," – also to provide China's analysis of the U.S. Persian Gulf War – delivering the message the "PLA's capabilities during a crisis would deter any enemy." In 1995, relations were stable between China and Taiwan, and public rhetoric was firm, yet civil, even despite

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Stumpf.

China delivering media messages on the use of military force “against the schemes of foreign forces to interfere with China’s reunification.”<sup>232</sup>

Following President Lee’s visit to the United States on July 18, 1996, China announced to the media missile tests would be carried out from July 21 to 28, north of Taipei. China kept true to the message, firing 6 CSS-6/M-9 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) followed by a guided missile and artillery firing exercise, including 20 PLA ships and 40 aircraft, which fired anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles.<sup>233</sup> In parallel, China conducted an underground nuclear test.

The U.S. military became involved shortly thereafter, deploying the USS *Nimitz*, and publicly accusing China of being “reckless” and “provocative.” In return, the PLA commenced Operation Express 60 moving more missiles toward the coast, announcing the missiles would be fired across important air and sea lanes. On March 8, three M-9s were fired and landed within 20 miles of Taiwan. The U.S. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), Secretary of State and National Security Advisor met with China’s vice minister of foreign affairs to deliver a “crystal clear, strong and unambiguous message,” they presumed grabbed the attention of senior ranking Chinese officials. Immediately following the U.S. news release, China countered by announcing another launch would take place March 9.<sup>234</sup> After this, the SECDEF met with CJCS, and with Presidential approval, ordered the USS *Independence* battle group to move toward Taiwan.

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<sup>232</sup> Porch.

<sup>233</sup> Chen.

<sup>234</sup> Porch.

As messaging escalated, military posturing escalated. The outcome of China's communication strategy included a response from China's foreign ministry spokesman promising Chinese forces would "resort to non-peaceful means" if foreign forces attempted to "invade" Taiwan—quite different from the original message which was a "blanket threat" against those interfering with China and Taiwan's reunification. Following Taiwan's elections, which proved favorable to China, China ended the exercises and the U.S. Navy moved the carrier groups away from the area.<sup>235</sup>

China reached the desired communication intent.<sup>236</sup> Research indicates the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis was an example of Chinese coercive diplomacy where China threatened certain consequences until both Taiwan and the United States changed policy. The United States used deterrence diplomacy to communicate to both Chinese and regional leader's strategic commitments and resolve were credible – purely reputational objectives.<sup>237</sup>

#### Chinese Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007

China's Hu Jintao did not have a coherent communication strategy prior to the ASAT missile test in 2007. The CCP and PLA executed a disjointed, atypical communication approach during this incident, and did not reach the desired intent. China used a land-based, medium-range ballistic missile fired from a mobile transporter-erector-launcher (TEL), and destroyed one of China's own satellites in space dispersing a

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ross.



debris cloud jeopardizing safety in Low Earth Orbit (LEO).<sup>238</sup> China received international protest as a result of the test, and a lack of communication signaled problems internally. China did not have a developed communication strategy and was reactive in nature.

One PLA officer from China's Arms Control Disarmament Association said China's lack of communication with the public prior to the test was out of the ordinary, and if China was attempting to use the test as a "bargaining chip," Chinese leaders would have made a public announcement prior to the engagement. Furthermore, Chinese officials briefed there was no arms race in space on the same day as the launch indicated it was a surprise to all involved.<sup>239</sup> Two months following the ASAT launch, China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao publicly announced peaceful intentions in space and a commitment towards negotiating a peace treaty for space, which was out of character for China and demonstrated a reactive approach to SC in this case.<sup>240</sup>

The 12-day silence following the test, combined with fragmented messaging, to include a denial of the weapons test by the military altogether, solidified the lack of communication strategy and coordination internally, and also raised the question of whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was even aware of the test.<sup>241</sup> The first statement following the ASAT test was very general in nature, released by MFA stating "this test was not directed at any country and does not constitute a threat to any

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<sup>238</sup> Kan.

<sup>239</sup> Kristensen.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Saunders and Lutes.

country.”<sup>242</sup> China miscalculated the international response to the weapons test, which led to massive criticism.

The outcome of China’s lack of transparency and communication strategy exacerbated the negative response across the globe and ran counter to previous messages claiming support for peaceful use of space. China did not reach the desired communication intent based upon the international outrage and formal protests by the Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, the United States and Taiwan.<sup>243</sup> To make matters worse for China, U.S. leaders responded with an even more complex, sophisticated satellite intercept from a submarine – with no response from China.<sup>244</sup> Table 2 summarizes the communication strategy findings for each engagement.

Table 2. Communication Strategy Findings

SC Plan Findings	Did China have an SC plan prior to engagement?	Did China have an SC plan during engagement?	Did the plan reach the desired intent?
Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979	Yes	Yes	No
Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007	No	No	No

*Source:* Created by author.

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Kristensen.

<sup>244</sup> Oh.

To gain another perspective on the findings, the following paragraphs take the communication strategies from China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007, and analyze them based upon China's goals of media warfare model. Chinese expert, and father of Information Warfare (IW) Dr. Shen Weiguang describes IW as a battle between two sides using technology to gain and control the information advantage. He asserts the objective of Chinese IW is control – to dominate the information space and seize information resources.”<sup>245</sup>

Based upon China's “incident-specific” communication strategy, each engagement was measured against the following criteria: (1) Establishing China's version of the incident; (2) Statement of principles for resolution of the incident; (3) Shut down unofficial, but normal information channels; (4) Emphasize Beijing's commitment to the U.S.-China relationship.<sup>246</sup> This model reveals whether China was able to successfully control the narrative during each engagement. Generally, China followed the incident-specific model, with the exception of the 2007 ASAT test, which was more reactive in nature, following the model after the fact. Table 3 delineates China's use of the incident-specific approach in 1979, 1996 and 2007.

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<sup>245</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 75.

Table 3. China's Incident-Specific Communication Strategy

China's "Incident Specific" Communication Objectives	Establishing China's Version of the Incident	Statement of Principles for Resolution of the Incident	Shut Down Unofficial, But Normal Information Channels	Emphasize Beijing's Commitment to the U.S.-China relationship
Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007	Yes/after the fact	Yes/after the fact	Yes	Yes/after the fact

Source: Created by author, data obtained from Steven Halper, *China: The Three Warfares* (Washington, DC: Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2013).

To achieve China's strategic objectives, PLA/CCP leaders follow the "Four Pillars of Media."<sup>247</sup> Generally, Chinese leaders followed the aforementioned four pillars model, with the exception of the 2007 ASAT test, which was out of the ordinary for China. Table 4 provides a breakdown using the "Four Pillars" model in the China's land invasion in 1979, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the 2007 ASAT missile test.

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<sup>247</sup> Halper, 71.

Table 4. China's Four Pillars of Media

China's Four Pillars of Media	Follow Top-Down Guidance	Emphasize pre-emption	Be flexible and responsive to changing conditions	Exploit All Available Resources
1979 Land Invasion of Vietnam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2007 Anti-Satellite Missile Test	No	No	No	No

Source: Created by author, data obtained from Steven Halper, Steven Halper, *China: The Three Warfares*, Washington, DC: Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, May 2013, accessed May 17, 2017.  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.650.9676&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

According to a 2013 *Office of Net Assessment* study, China's four goals of media warfare are as follows: (1) Preserve friendly morale; (2) Generate public support at home and abroad; (3) Weaken an enemy's will to fight; (4) Alter an enemy's situational assessment. Each engagement tallied mixed results, meeting some criteria, while not meeting others. Table 5 delineates whether China reached its own four media warfare goals during the land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007.

Table 5. China's Four Goals of Media Warfare

<b>China's Four Goals of Media Warfare</b>	<b>Preserve Friendly Morale</b>	<b>Generate Public Support at home and abroad</b>	<b>Weaken enemy's will to fight</b>	<b>Alter an enemy's situational assessment</b>
Land Invasion of Vietnam in 1979	No	No	No	No
Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anti-Satellite Missile Test in 2007	No	No	No	Yes

Source: Created by author, data obtained from Steven Halper Steven Halper, *China: The Three Warfares*, Washington, DC: Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, May 2013, accessed May 17, 2017.  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.650.9676&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

To elaborate on these findings, China's Deng Xiaoping had a methodical and deliberate, albeit simple, communication strategy before and during the land invasion into Vietnam in 1979. China's communication strategy was developed and executed through domestic and international media and senior leader engagements and was considered typical of China. The outcome of China's communication strategy included lack of U.S. support and inflamed Soviet relations. China did not achieve the desired intent to build an alliance and support with the United States prior to invading, nor did it effectively increase the will of the populace or the Chinese warfighter.

Deng had a more complex, deliberate communication strategy prior to and during the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. China's communication strategy was developed and executed through domestic and international media and senior leader engagements, coupled with carefully timed military engagements in order to achieve strategic objectives. The outcome of China's communication strategy included a response from China's foreign ministry spokesmen promising Chinese forces would "resort to non-peaceful means" if foreign forces attempted to "invade" Taiwan—quite different from the original message which was a "blanket threat" against those interfering with China and Taiwan's reunification. China reached the desired communication intent. Experts claim the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis was an example of Chinese coercive diplomacy where China would threaten certain consequences until both Taiwan and the United States changed policy.

China's Hu Jintao did not have a communication strategy prior the 2007 ASAT missile test and had a disjointed, atypical approach during the incident. China did not execute a communication strategy and was reactive in nature. The repercussions of China's lack of transparency and communication strategy exacerbated the negative response across the globe and ran counter to previous messages claiming support for peaceful use of space. Some argued China's ASAT test and the way it was carried out served as a "smoking gun" proving hostile intent in space.<sup>248</sup> China did not reach the desired communication intent based upon the international outrage and formal protests by the Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, the United States and Taiwan.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

Chapter 4 addressed the primary and subsidiary questions and outlined the communication strategy for each engagement in the following order: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. The remaining portion of the chapter provided further analysis using models based upon Steven Halper's Office of Net Assessment research on China's approach to warfare.<sup>249</sup> Chapter 5 covers conclusions and recommendations.

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

Based upon the Eastern way of war, China does not seek military victory by outright annihilation, but by encircling via soft power, lulling opponents into complacency – by disrupting the plans of the adversary, preventing a clear view.<sup>250</sup> Sun Tzu asserted the art of war was to subdue the enemy without fighting.<sup>251</sup> China strives to capitalize on the strategy of *shi*. It is possible for an enemy of China not to know they are losing because they do not even know they are at war.

Over the course of three decades, spanning three domains, China has initiated military engagements capturing the attention of the international community. After an examination of the events leading to, and throughout these incidents, research revealed key indicators of China's intent, providing insight through patterns of communication and subsequent actions. This thesis attempted to answer the following questions: to what degree did China plan its communication strategy before and during: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007? Other subsidiary questions include: (1) How was the communication strategy developed and executed; (2) What was the outcome of the communication strategy in each case; (3) Did communication plans achieve the desired intent? Chapter 5 provides conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further

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<sup>250</sup> Sun Tzu.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

research. This chapter makes meaning of the findings based upon the Chinese communication strategy models, describes implications, and specifies whether there were any unexpected findings. The chapter also addresses whether there is any indication China's communication efforts have evolved, and how it may impact the current strategic environment.

To summarize the findings from chapter 4, China had a communication strategy before and during two out of three previously described incidents. China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979, and the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996 both had communication plans, but the 2007 ASAT missile test did not. The two incidents with communication strategies were developed and executed in slightly different ways. The communication strategy before and during the land invasion into Vietnam was simple and methodical. It was what was expected out of China, according to subject matter experts. The communication strategy before and during the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1996 was more aggressive and timed to accentuate major military force posturing. The repercussions of each strategy were different. The simple, deliberate strategy used in the Vietnam land invasion was not successful in reaching strategic objectives. China's aggressive strategy during the Taiwan Strait crisis, intricately coupled with an escalation of military force posturing was successful. The lack of communication strategy involved with the 2007 ASAT testing proved a failure on many levels.

When China takes a passive approach to communication combined with military force, they have failed. When China takes a carefully planned, aggressive communication strategy coupled with hard power, the informational efforts have proven effective. When China engages militarily, and there is no prior public announcement or apparent

communication strategy, this indicates internal strife and possibly a lack of coordination and cooperation within the CCP and/or PLA, or with other echelons of leadership. The findings also indicate the internal state of affairs within China, comparatively, within each domain – air, space, land, sea and/or cyber.

China was successful in the IE when communication efforts were coupled with joint warfare, but failed when coupled with land warfare, and space warfare only. To take it one step further, results indicate the will and confidence of the Chinese people and/or military may be stronger in support of joint warfare versus with land or space warfare, or communication within the ranks is better when joint warfare is involved versus space or land warfare alone. These patterns indicate when facing a territorial dispute, China will have a deliberate and aggressive communication strategy, coupled with hard power, as recorded in the land invasion of Vietnam and the Taiwan Strait Crisis respectively. The difference between 1979 and 1996 is unlike the Vietnam land invasion, when China faced a force equal to or stronger they backed down. These findings were not expected and provided an interesting insight on the inner-workings of China and the way they conduct business in the information realm.

As of 2016, China's has a Publicity Department, comprised of "censors" and spokesmen supervising, 3,300 television stations, 2,000 newspapers and 10,000 periodicals, with a budget of \$10 million to place China's opinions into foreign media outlets.<sup>252</sup> Another function of the Publicity Department is the chief signals office, which

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<sup>252</sup> The Economist, "Propaganda: Who Draws the Party Line? Xi Jinping Sends his Spin Doctors Spinning," Beijing, June 25, 2016, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.economist.ws-party-line>.

decides what speeches to print and how to publicize various campaigns.<sup>253</sup> Additionally, Chinese leaders groom individuals ages 30-40 for command in the IW realm. These individuals are trained to master the principles and skills in the information domain they may not have learned in college.

Meanwhile, Chinese individuals younger than age 30 receive training on ideological concepts of IW, as well as theater strategy and tactics. Many of these individuals are taken from the 1.5 million strong reserve force, turning some districts of China into “mini-IW regiments.”<sup>254</sup> According to an article in *The Economist*, published in June 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping, made a widely publicized visit to China’s three main media organizations, *People’s Daily*, *Xinhua* and *China Central Television*, where he stressed all media must “love the party, protect the party and serve the party.”<sup>255</sup> According to a University of Hong Kong study entitled, “China Media Project,” China began this aggressive approach to agenda-setting via media beginning in 2008 with Hu Jintao. Chinese journalists refer to the approach, which is also present today, as “public opinion channeling.”<sup>256</sup> The principles of Chinese IW include decapitation, blinding, transparency, quick-response, and survival, according to Chinese Senior Colonel Wang Baocon.<sup>257</sup> These principles make it difficult to understand China’s

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

<sup>255</sup> The Economist, “Propaganda: Who Draws the Party Line? Xi Jinping Sends his Spin Doctors Spinning,” Beijing, June 25, 2016, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.economist.ws-party-line>.

<sup>256</sup> The China Media Project, “Grabbing the Megaphone,” The University of Hong Kong, accessed May 15, 2017, [cmp.hku.hk/2010/04/20/5436](http://cmp.hku.hk/2010/04/20/5436).

actions in the IE, and underscore the importance of increasing situational awareness in this arena.

### Recommendations

The DoD, along with partner agencies, will continue to benefit from an increased situational understanding about China's information practices. This understanding will positively impact U.S. efforts to favorably shape the security environment. According to Thomas, the Chinese military views Western culture as an assault on China, and China seeks to rise in power viewing the information domain as vital to success.<sup>258</sup> Research in this study verifies the United States should develop an approach to "puncture" China's current communication strategy by countering the narrative seen today.<sup>259</sup> Furthermore, it is possible Chinese narrative may highlight what China fears the most, showcasing what China needs in order to be seen as powerful.

The U.S. must become more engaged in public diplomacy and media relations with regard to China. Also, the United States will be most successful in the information domain by bringing truth to the public, without the need to distort facts.<sup>260</sup> The character of the information warfare threat and repercussions for failure in this area punctuate the necessity to fill vital capability gaps in the information arena – specifically in the areas of doctrine, organization, personnel, and leadership. China has already made progress in

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<sup>257</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>259</sup> Ford.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

these areas and dedicates an exponentially larger amount of resources than the United States, as indicated by their information warfare regiments, SC-related education and training, and through their unified narrative. Although the United States does not control the media like China, proactive measures in SC resourcing would increase the likelihood of much-needed improvements in communicating with the public.

Doctrine and organization must be refined to synchronize information efforts with joint, interagency, and multi-national partners, and within multi-domain operations. Information activities conducted in this manner capitalize on the positive effects unity of effort bring to the fight. Adequate proportions of DoD personnel must be dedicated toward information efforts – both uniformed and civilian. Lastly, and most importantly, is the leadership solution. Highly developed, culturally aware, agile leaders and practitioners are required in order to link an understanding of tactical, operational and strategic objectives with effective communication efforts. If DoD leaders created a pathway of success for information practitioners to reach the highest military ranks, competition would rise, innovation would flourish, and quality recruitment and retention may increase – all resulting in the level of execution required to succeed in the IE long-term.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

1. How is China integrating cyber and media warfare?
2. What is China's communication strategy for territorial claims in the South China Sea?
3. How will China use cyber information warfare, by proxy, against adversaries?

4. How can the Army better prepare and train for SC in a realistic contested and degraded environment with air, space and cyber constraints?
5. Would SC improve if information practitioners had a pathway for success in their military career?

In conclusion, this research was designed to add to the body of scholarly knowledge by illuminating China's actions in the information realm based on three military engagements which included: China's land invasion into Vietnam in 1979; the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996; and the Chinese anti-satellite missile test in 2007. Chapter 5 provided conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. The chapter made meaning of the findings based upon the Chinese communication strategy models, described implications, and specified whether there were any unexpected findings. The chapter also addressed whether there are any indications China's informational efforts may have evolved, and how they may impact the current strategic environment. Overall, this research underscored China's soft power approach to warfare via information and raised awareness on China's techniques and procedures in the information domain. The United States must maintain high situational and cultural awareness in order to be ready for China's actions in the IE. Otherwise, the U.S. may lose the battle before there is an awareness the battle has begun.

## GLOSSARY

*Ba*. Chinese equivalent of the English word, “hegemon.”<sup>261</sup>

Communication Strategy. A joint force commander’s strategy for coordinating and synchronizing themes, messages, images, and actions to support SC related objectives and ensure the integrity and consistency of themes and messages to the lowest tactical level.

*Goujian*. Chinese word describing the rising challenger who aspires to become the ruler of the world.<sup>262</sup>

Information Operations. The integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.<sup>263</sup>

Information Warfare (China). Struggles in which two sides use the tools for information technology to obtain, control, and use information.<sup>264</sup>

Measure of Effectiveness. A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability or operational environment is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. Also called a MOE.<sup>265</sup>

Measure of Performance. A criterion used to assess friendly action is tied to measuring task accomplishment. Also called MOP.<sup>266</sup>

Messages. A narrowly focused communication directed at a specific audience to create a specific effect.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Pillsbury.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>263</sup> Department of the Army, FM 3-13.

<sup>264</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

<sup>265</sup> Department of Defense, JP 3-0.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.



Narrative. Enduring strategic communication with context, reason/motive, and goal/end state.<sup>268</sup>

Operational Environment. A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decision of the commander.<sup>269</sup>

*Shi*. Chinese word for deceiving others into doing your bidding, and waiting for the point of maximum opportunity to strike.<sup>270</sup>

Soft Power. The ability to influence through persuasion rather than coercion, excluding the more traditional forms of influence such as investment and formal diplomacy.

Stratagems. Scheming and military strategy; the war planning employed by the two opposing combatants to be used at different levels of military strategy, military campaign, and military tactics in order to obtain victory. Military stratagem is a product of the development of war, the concrete manifestation of human subjective actions upon material forces. It reflects the general principles of military struggles, possessing a corresponding stable nature and vigorous liveliness.<sup>271</sup>

Strategic Communication. Refers to focused United States government (USG) efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with and leveraging the actions of all instruments of national power. SC combines actions, words, and images to influence key audiences.<sup>272</sup> The working definition from which this paper will draw upon is as follows: “Coordinated actions, messages, images and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.” The core of this definition includes four main elements: (1) Informing, influencing, and persuading are important; (2) Effectively informing, influencing, and persuading requires clear objectives; (3) Coordination communicate.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Department of Defense, JP 3-0.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>271</sup> Thomas, *Dragon Bytes*.

<sup>272</sup> Department of Defense, JP 5-0.

<sup>273</sup> Paul.

Themes. An overarching concept or intention, designed for a broad application to achieve specific objectives.<sup>274</sup>

Three Warfares. “In 2003 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Central Committee, and the Central Military Commission (CMC) approved the concept of the Three Warfares – a PLA information warfare concept aimed at preconditioning key areas of competition in its favor. The concept is detailed in Chapter 2, Section 18 of the ‘Chinese People’s Liberation Army Political Work Regulations.’ The U.S. Department of Defense has defined the ‘Three Warfares’ as the following:

- (1) Psychological Warfare – seeks to undermine an enemy’s ability to conduct combat operations through operations aimed at deterring, shocking, and demoralizing enemy military personnel and supporting civilian populations;
- (2) Media Warfare – is aimed at influencing domestic and international public opinion to build support for China’s military actions and dissuade an adversary from pursuing actions contrary to China’s interests; \*This definition also serves as the closest to the U.S. version of strategic communication.
- (3) Legal Warfare – uses international and domestic law to claim the legal high ground or assert Chinese interests. It can be used to thwart an opponent’s operational freedom and shape the operational space. It is also used to build international support and manage possible political repercussions of China’s military.”<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, vol. 2.

<sup>275</sup> Halper.

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